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Chapter 3

English Education Research and Classroom Practice: New Directions for New Times

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In exploring the role of research in the secondary school subject traditionally known as “English,” we address a host of issues crowded with problems and potentials. Surely the perennially debated contours of the field have never been more in question, as new technologies and transforming patterns of civic, workplace, and global communication challenge us to enlarge our notions of what is truly basic in concert with the myriad opportunities, dangers, and complexities of today’s world (Luke, 2004a, 2004b). As those who teach the secondary subject and who provide teachers’ professional preparation, English educators are positioned to serve as critical mediators of these new challenges. This is admittedly no easy undertaking, as academics’ ongoing efforts to build ever-richer conceptions of literacy remain markedly at odds with the determined emphasis on basic skills both reflected in and reified by the No Child Left Behind initiative in the United States (U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2007). English educators therefore face the formidable task of negotiating between the complex vision of contemporary research and the modernist take on literate competency embedded in recent education policies (Yagelski, 2006), with their concomitant conception of research as “market commodity *qua* objective product testing and market research” (Luke, 2004a, p. 1427).

As U.S. states and districts respond to federal pressure to adopt practices based on “scientific” studies (USDOE, 2007), English educators are endeavoring to foster appreciation of the broader intellectual traditions that have shaped understandings of the high school subject through the years—including not only the social sciences but also literary studies, philosophy, and the arts (National Council of Teachers of English [NCTE], 2007; see also the American Educational Research Association [AERA] Task

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Force on Standards for Reporting in Humanities Research, 2007; guidelines forthcoming 2008). In light of this intellectual diversity, even tougher challenges lie in articulating just what it means for scholarly perspectives to influence teachers' work in useful and satisfying ways and to foster such influence in English education pre- and in-service preparation programs. In the United States, new urgency and challenge is added to the work of English teacher educators by the nation's changing demographics and persistent socioeconomic divide; as the nation's schools see a growing minority population, ethnic disparities persist in terms of school achievement, drop-out rates, and eventual income (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007).¹

Although the influence of English education research to date is difficult to ascertain with certainty, its growth and promise are surely not. As this diverse and growing body of work continues to provide substantive insights, questions, and generative new frameworks for contemplating the daily work of classrooms, the time is opportune for a reappraisal of the history, present status, and potential of research in English education in the United States—its place over time in a contested field, its efforts to address questions of relevance to practitioners, and its emergent reimagining as scholars and teachers build better understandings of one another's worlds and work. Perhaps the traditional tendency to speak of a research–practice chasm is but another instance of the binary oppositions that have plagued educational argumentation at least since Dewey's day (1938/1963), a discursive artifact that—given the educational urgencies of a changing world and ill-advised federal interventions—neither English teachers nor researchers can yet afford.

Toward this end, we begin with a look back at the emergence of English education in the social and political context of the United States as a nation, situating the development of the research–practice divide narrative in debates concerning the nature and purpose of English as secondary-school subject in changing times. We turn next to researchers' efforts to provide generative implications for classroom practice as they have widened the scope of their inquiries to situate individual learners in an expanding array of contexts—and ultimately challenged not only the field's traditional focus on language as the prime mode of representation but also its early preoccupation with national identity. As notions of “context” are destabilized by the globalized, digitalized environments of a new century, the time is right for rethinking as well traditional conceptions of the separation of research and practice. Beyond considering the robust implications of research to date, we look to recent efforts to bring the work of research and teaching together in ways that not only offer profound integration but also begin to dissolve altogether the distinction between the work of English educators in the secondary classroom and the academy. Finally, we close by calling on the field to develop more generative theoretic frameworks to enhance our understandings of how research can and does inform practice and to explore how varied research traditions might more explicitly inform one another in moving us toward richer understandings of literacy teaching and learning.

HISTORIC CONTEXTS OF ENGLISH EDUCATION RESEARCH

English Education for the American People(s)

Controversy surrounding the nature and purpose of the U.S. school subject known as English can be traced to its inception a century ago, the questions tenaciously familiar across the decades: Does it serve to transmit a stable body of content and skills or to foster a more dynamic, shape-shifting process of meaning making? Should it reify a cultural mainstream or promote appreciation of diverse points of view and ways with words? Is it more appropriately seen as a higher education gatekeeper or as preparation for life? Narratives of the field have often posited an opposition between what Applebee (1974) called “tradition and reform,” as American educators have engaged in curricular debates inexorably embedded in larger questions concerning the role of the subject in a changing nation (see VanSledright, this volume). Our overview of the emergence and development of English education research is therefore also about values and vision, the ends as well as the means of English as high school subject, and the often contentious role of the academy generally and research particularly in informing its direction, scope, and purpose. Even as echoes of the competing concerns that gave birth to English as school subject and English education as profession are clearly discernible in debates between neotraditionalists and neoprogressives in our own time, the challenge of addressing disparities in wealth and opportunity has never seemed greater (see Shannon, 2001). Just as literacy instruction designed to build a sense of unified national identity is no longer sufficient to the challenges of today’s globalized, culturally fluid world, so too is the narrative of research–practice divide rendered particularly problematic by the personal, political, and vocational contexts that today’s adolescents will both encounter and shape.

The origins of English as secondary-school subject are commonly traced to the Committee of Ten (Applebee, 1974; Hook, 1979), a group of university professors chaired by Harvard’s Charles W. Eliot that sought to stipulate subject-area preparation for higher education. In their published report (Committee of Ten of the National Education Association [NEA], 1894), the group described a high school course in English that would meet for 5 hours weekly for 4 years, emphasizing literary masterpieces and judicious training in correct expression. In a companion set of developments, the National Conference on Uniform Entrance Requirements (Hill, 1898) developed rosters of works to be universally read across the high school years (hereafter, the Uniform Lists), reflecting an Arnoldian commitment to fostering cultural unity and countering new-world “intellectual mediocrity” (Arnold, 1875/1971, p. 13) through study of canonical works. In much the same spirit as the cultural literacy movement in our own time (Core Knowledge Foundation, 2007; Hirsch, 1987, 1996), such efforts reflected professorial preoccupation with specifying what every educated American needs to know, promoting an enduringly powerful conception of English as a culturally cohesive body of content to be internalized and passed on to posterity.

In the inaugural issue of NCTE’s *English Journal*, Hosis (1912) observed that the Uniform Lists had placed English education in “an educational storm center” (p. 95).

Fred Newton Scott was among many decrying the belief that high schools served only to prepare students for college, attacking the Uniform Lists as higher education “feudalism” (Scott, 1901, p. 365) and “required reverence” (Scott, 1909, p. 14). Attention to diversity was much in the air in the early years of the new century, as unprecedented numbers of adolescents stayed in school through adolescence, most with no plans to attend college. Caught between mandates informed by elite traditionalists and the needs of the students before them, English educators grew restive, activist, and rhetorically extravagant. Cast as the “menace of academic pedantry,” the Uniform Lists were seen as products of the “inbred conservatism of the scholar,” deemed heedless of the “polyglot immigrant population” thronging the nation’s schools (Chubb, 1912, pp. 34, 36). Responses to diversity were as sharply divided then as now, the forebearers of today’s English-only and standardization movements aligned against those who would embrace the diversity of the nation’s new citizens and the attendant implications for schools.

Rising interest in education for everyday life was apparent in such responsive documents as the NEA Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education’s (1918) *Cardinal Principles*, a landmark Progressive Era formulation of democratic goals intended to guide school reform, with an emphasis on preparing diverse young people for work, citizenship, raising families, and leading happy, healthy, and ethical lives (see Wraga, 2001). These sentiments found further expression in “Reorganization of English in Secondary Schools” (Hosic, 1917), the official statement of a subcommittee composed of representatives of the NEA’s Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education and the newly constituted NCTE. Commonly known as the Hosic Report—after its primary author, James Fleming Hosic—the document argued that as most graduates were going not into college but, rather, into “life,” high school English should emphasize “basic personal and social needs” (p. 26). Preparation in reading, writing, speaking, and thinking were said to serve three fundamental purposes: (a) cultural (“to open to the pupil new and higher forms of pleasure”), (b) vocational (“to fit the student for the highest success in his chosen calling”), and (c) social and ethical (“to present to the student noble ideals, aid in the formation of his character, and make him more efficient and actively interested in his relations with and service to others in the community and in the Nation”) (Hosic, 1917, p. 32). These triadic goals would remain influential in the United States for decades to come, even as new avenues of inquiry provided fresh vistas onto the old debates between canonical traditionalists and literacy-for-life progressives—and the nation’s burgeoning cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity continued to raise a host of issues at once educational, social, and political. (That the most visible players in these debates were European American men is generally cast as a given in histories of the field; for an account of the role of women in the history of NCTE, see Gerlach & Monseu, 1991.)

Born of what many saw as university professors’ undue control of secondary curricula, in its early days, NCTE was primarily focused on serving a membership of high school teachers. Concerned about inattention to research and to the early

grades, a small group of NCTE members went on to found the National Conference on Research in English (NCRE) in 1932. Although much of NCRE's initial work focused on the elementary level, through its various partnerships with NCTE, publications, and annual meetings, it brought new attention to the relevance of research across the grade levels. In 1959, for instance, NCRE member Guy Bond posed a series of enduringly key questions concerning the relationship between research and practice, challenging the organization to consider ways that research might be "interpreted and reported for wider use," reflected in "instructional materials," and taken up in pre- and in-service teacher education with an emphasis on "critical evaluations of methods used and validity of findings" as well as searching discussion of "their implications for instructional change" (Petty, 1983, p. 43). Though small and selective, NCRE encompassed a range of perspectives, female as well as male leaders, and the promising beginnings of efforts to complement the research efforts of NCTE, the International Reading Association (IRA), and AERA by "synthesizing, interpreting, and implementing the findings of the best research" (Petty, 1983, p. 78). As research efforts gathered momentum in the '50s and '60s, NCRE renewed its commitment to hosting meetings in collaboration with NCTE as well the IRA, enjoying something of a new "heyday" (Petty, 1983, p. 36).

The nature of English education and the potential of research were revisited and debated throughout the 1960s, as the crises of the time—Sputnik, the Vietnam war, the struggle for civil rights, enduring disparities in wealth and opportunity—imparted fresh urgency to the underlying questions of what constitutes foundational literacy in a changing and troubled national landscape. Providing empirically informed perspectives on the progressives' notion of individually appropriate preparation for life, conversations of the day also registered occasional echoes of the traditionalist focus on English as a stable body of content. Two meetings during this time make visible the issues being debated in the areas of research and practice. Of the multiple professional gatherings that focused on the challenge of developing a more cohesive and systematic program of research on English education, the 1962 Project English meeting at the Carnegie Institute of Technology was regarded as especially noteworthy (Henry, 1966). Attended by the premiere U.S. English educators of the era, the group charted needed research across the grade levels, calling for linguistic studies, rigorous measurement, and computer modeling of psychological processes (Steinberg, 1963). Cutting-edge work that would prove enduringly influential appeared during these years, including landmark studies of students' oral and written language (e.g., Hunt's [1965] research on the maturation of students' written syntax, employing T-unit analyses, and Loban's [1976] longitudinal studies of student readers and writers [which we take up later]).

Echoes of English education's beginnings as well as a vigorous vision of its future were everywhere apparent at the 1996 Anglo-American Seminar on the Teaching and Learning of English at Dartmouth, funded by the Carnegie Corporation and cosponsored by NCTE and the Modern Language Association (MLA) in the United States as well as the National Association of Teachers of English (NATE) in the United

Kingdom. As the landmark gathering sought to formulate a shared conception of English as school subject and preferred instructional strategies, participants' discussions came to be richly informed by growing British interest in developmental psychology, the relationship between language and learning and engagement and equity (Dixon, 1967/1975; Harris, 1991; Muller, 1967).

And yet the perspectives at Dartmouth were far from consistent (Harris, 1991; E. G. Lewis, 1970; Marckwardt, 1970), the contrasts especially evident in Americans' mixed response to British participants' call for a "Copernican shift from a view of English as something one *learns about* to a sense of it as something one *does*" (Harris, 1991, p. 631), not a "package to be handed over" (Dixon, 1967/1975, p. 81). Dixon (1967/1975) reported that "After the initial shock of hearing this from British lips, there was some U.S. sympathy with this view" (p. 72)—even as other Americans called for a renewed focus on literary scholarship and masterworks modeled after university curricula (Harris, 1991), reflecting the canonical sensibilities of the Committee of Ten as well as Sputnik-era preoccupation with instructional rigor and consistency (see Commission on English, 1965; NCTE, 1961).

Harris (1991) later pointed out that a number of U.K. and U.S. Dartmouth participants who would come to be well known as champions of learner-centered, developmental perspectives (Britton and Dixon among the British and Moffett among the Americans, for instance) presented themselves primarily as teachers, despite their significant scholarly credentials. "In thus rooting their work firmly in the schoolroom but not in the graduate seminar," argued Harris (1991), they in effect ceded the high ground to the scholars . . . [and] ended up reinscribing the split between teaching and research" (p. 641).

It is perhaps too simplistic, however, to ascribe what have been called the "empty echoes of Dartmouth" (Hamilton-Wieler, 1988) to the at once practical and scholarly sensibilities of the event's participants. If English remained as Dixon (1967/1975) described it in the opening line of *Growth Through English*, "a quicksilver among metals—mobile, living and elusive" (p. 1), the new emphasis on teachers' roles in fostering individual development brought an array of important grassroots movements even as federal funding on both sides of the Atlantic dissipated in the ensuing years. As Squire and Britton argued in their foreword to a reissue of Dixon's classic account some years after Dartmouth, the new focus on "learning rather than teaching" (p. xv) was felt in individual teachers' reflections on their work, in an array of grassroots efforts as well as in national professional development efforts in the United States (perhaps most notably, those sponsored by MLA, NCTE, and IRA). Similarly, the growth model animated research endeavors for decades to come, influencing the advent of sociolinguistic and ethnographic research in the '70s and '80s as well as the formation of the National Writing Project (NWP), with its long-term commitment to fostering teachers' consumption as well as production of research. The shaping role of language in student learning would become a major focus of teachers and scholars alike, even as U.S. education policy reflected commitment to standardization and a view of English as a stable body of content and skills.

The Growth of English Education Research

In addition to the intellectual ferment of Project English and the Dartmouth conference among U.S. English educators, the 1960s also saw a wave of new initiatives by professional organizations intended to promote, disseminate, and reward research. For example, NCTE introduced its empirical journal in 1967 (*Research in the Teaching of English*), gave its first Research Foundation grants, established research awards, partnered with ERIC to produce a database of relevant studies (Hook, 1979; NCTE, 2007), and published a landmark review of research on writing (Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, & Schoer, 1963).

Although the organization's Research Foundation may have been more likely in those days "to approve proposals that promised a rather quick classroom pay-off" (Hook, 1979, p. 213), many in NCTE's leadership were strongly committed to building a conceptually rigorous empirical base to guide the work of teachers across the grade levels (Hook, 1979). The inaugural issue of *Research in the Teaching of English* in 1967 reflected the scale of the undertaking, offering two articles providing rudimentary introductions to methodological approaches (Budd, 1967; Gunderson, 1967) and a scattering of essentially atheoretic reports profiling poor writers (Potter, 1967), students' writing frequencies (Hunting, 1967), and the effects of writing teachers' correction techniques (Stiff, 1967). In a companion set of developments, the IRA published the first issue of *Reading Research Quarterly* in 1965, which would evolve from an initial early-literacy emphasis to encompass studies across the grade levels.

Efforts to connect literacy research to classroom practice were manifest in AERA publications during these years as well, perhaps most notably in the first edition of its *Handbook of Research on Teaching* (which included a chapter reviewing separate bodies of work on teaching composition and literature; Meckel, 1963; see review in Spalding, 1963). A chapter in the second edition appearing a decade later found the burgeoning field promising yet flawed, its effects on classroom practice limited by a lack of consensus concerning the objectives of the English curriculum, uneven methodological quality, and absence of coordination across investigations (Blount, 1973). In calling for studies conducted by teachers, Blount anticipated the teacher-research movement of subsequent decades (see Cochran-Smith & Donnell, 2006; Zeichner & Nofke, 2001) while also implicitly recalling Progressive Era interest in Deweyan-oriented lab schools in which teachers both enacted and encouraged a spirit of inquiry (see Putney & Green, in press).

As the influence of research on teaching across the fields of study was increasingly subject to critique (see Clifford, 1973), English education's continuing identity crisis imparted discipline-specific intensity to larger debates regarding the efficacy of research expenditures. Even amid new support for pursuing and publishing English education research, one vocal member of NCTE complained,

There is no applied research unless there is theory to render it practical. . . . Research, to be important, must be in the main stream of the general ideas of a discipline . . . [but] there seemed to be little philosophical effort to determine the river bed or large contexts in which English operates. (Henry, 1966, p. 234)

Freshly honed versions of the familiar questions—English as a situated set of purposeful activities or the transmission of a body of content—would continue to shape debates concerning the role of research in years to come.

Contested Terrains and New Directions

Two decades later, as intensifying concern about standardized test scores provoked calls for a renewed emphasis on a basic-skills approach to instruction, interest in the relevance of research to classroom practice was once again on the rise. Some looked to a growing body of English education research in formulating responses to the back-to-basics movement (see Squire, 1982); in another landmark development, Hillocks (1984) published a much-cited meta-analysis of experimental studies of composition and argued their potential to enhance practice. Although terming experimental work “fool’s gold” (Grindstaff, 1987, p. 47) and charging that research to date had been more concerned with the academic reward structure than offering insights of value to teachers, a NCTE report on English education research (Peters & the Conference on English Education [CEE] Commission on Research in Teacher Effectiveness, 1987) did strike a note of tentative optimism in looking to future studies to convey more effectively the nuanced complexities of actual classrooms (Grindstaff, 1987). Others remained more skeptical. The ever-vocal Henry (1984) fumed that English education researchers were “pumping out, shall we say, piles of research” as yet bereft of a rigorous conception of the field and its empirical domain; similarly, Purves (1984) despaired that the NCTE of the ’80s had become a “vast network without an intellectual center,” plagued by a “general disdain [of] theory and research,” “anti-intellectualism,” and a tendency to treat teachers as crafts persons rather than professionals (pp. 694–695).

But the field’s gathering sense of purpose was much in evidence soon thereafter, as the MLA and NCTE cosponsored the English Coalition Conference—a gathering comprised primarily of teachers and teacher educators that would once again contemplate current challenges, new directions, and as it turned out, the role of research. Although participant Booth (1987) argued that the resultant publications (Elbow, 1990; Lloyd-Jones & Lunsford, 1989) offered little that was strikingly new, the timing of the event—the same year as the release of E. D. Hirsch’s influential *Cultural Literacy* (1987) amid Reagan-era interest in conservative educational reform—imparted new exigency to the challenge of articulating a larger vision of the nature and purpose of English education (increasingly conceptualized as K–12 language arts). As conference attendees began their deliberations, Hirsch’s book was rendering the old Hosis-era contentions new again, firing fresh volleys at Deweyan progressivism and the spirit of the *Cardinal Principles*, eschewing celebration of active, experiential learning environments in favor of a fact-based curriculum emphasizing study of canonical literary works that gestured back to the Committee of Ten.

In his personal account of the 3-week conference, Elbow (1990) described a series of events that situate the recurrent debate concerning the nature of the field and its relationship to research in the political atmosphere of the times. Chester Finn, then

Assistant Secretary of Education for Educational Research and Improvement, had given a talk critiquing education reforms across recent decades and arguing the promise of Hirsch's book, which was then followed by a visit from the *Cultural Literacy* author himself. Decidedly unsettled, participants would be reinspired some days later by none other than a leading researcher, Shirley Brice Heath, who eloquently described the work of the English classroom as focusing on language—the uses of language toward a variety of purposes and toward a variety of ends, the value of reflection on one's own and others' language use, and the importance of ensuring that students find both personal satisfaction and adequate challenge in their studies. Heath's presentation helped participants articulate their own felt sense that the ever-changing work of teaching and learning is infinitely more complex and satisfying than reading lists and instructional prescriptions would have it. It became an episode, Elbow recalled, "of Chester Finn and E. D. Hirsch laying siege to us and Shirley Brice Heath riding in on a white horse to the rescue" (p. 16). Heath had spoken to the group as decision-making professionals in need not of reductive prescription but generative big ideas that recalled the vision and vitality of Dartmouth.

The secondary group's official statement—published in the report of the conference, titled *Democracy Through Language* (Lloyd-Jones & Lunsford, 1989)—also reflected the post-Dartmouth influence of developmentalist and social-constructivist notions as well as the sociolinguistic, anthropological, and developmental perspectives informing the work of language scholars such as Heath: "Learning is the process of actively constructing meaning from experiences"; "Others—parents, teachers, and peers—help learners construct meanings"; and "Learners at different ages and stages of development may well learn in different ways" (Lloyd-Jones & Lunsford, 1989, p. 17). Although appendices of shared empirical and theoretic reading were included at the end of the report, the influences of these texts on the group's various recommendations for practice were left largely unspecified; and although many of these recommendations seem reasonable enough—"use language effectively to create knowledge, meaning and community" (p. 19) and so on—a casual reader could readily surmise that they emerged from participants' personal values and beliefs alone. For this and no doubt multiple reasons besides, the English Coalition Conference would exert little lasting influence on policy, practice, or research in the ensuing years.

Old Questions and New Urgencies

"The past is never dead," Faulkner (1951/1975) famously observed; "it's not even past" (p. 80). And so it is that as English educators continue to review, debate, and expand their own conceptions of the field, reform initiatives premised on a traditional view of English as a body of stable content knowledge and discrete skills have once again assumed precedence.

In light of recent calls for "evidence-based practice" enacted by "highly qualified teachers" possessing "subject-matter knowledge" (USDOE, 2007), the field faces an escalating need to respond to federal policies that are shaping the work of English teachers and researchers alike. Although representatives of the profession endeavor to

argue that research appropriately informs rather than dictates classroom practice and that teachers must be seen as makers as well as receivers of professional knowledge (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; DiPardo et al., 2006), English education yet awaits more systematic efforts to trace the full variety of ways in which research can and does come to inform classroom practice. Notwithstanding efforts across the disciplines to weave stronger connections between research and teaching (e.g., Donovan, Wigdor, & Snow, 2003) and to foster appreciation of traditions of teacher inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Donnell, 2006; Putney & Green, in press; Zeichner & Nofke, 2001), the ubiquity and complexity of English as school subject lends both added significance and difficulty to such undertakings. As scholars trace broadening conceptions of 21st century literacy, research paradigms proliferate, and policymakers continue to make literacy a key focus, the relationship between English education research and classroom practice is more complex than ever in its contours, potential, and challenges.

Current conversations concerning the scope of English education and the role of research are also marked by an intensified focus on serving all students. Although the field took shape at the turn of the past century amid unprecedented ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity in the nation's schools, increasing school enrollments and a fast-growing minority population (NCES, 2007) are imparting a new sense of urgency. Research documenting a persistent literacy achievement gap between minority and poor students and their more affluent Euro-American counterparts is weighing on both policymakers and researchers, stimulating empirical attention to issues of equity and attracting more diverse scholars to the field (see Meacham, 2000–2001). English education is infused with not only a renewed commitment to serving an increasingly diverse student population but also an ever-rich array of researchers, questions, epistemologies, and tools.

As federal insistence on evidence-based practice is provoking a fresh wave of interest in the research–practice relationship, English education is confronted with perils as well as possibilities. Facing the imposition of purportedly research-driven back-to-basics curricula, the field is newly motivated to offer its own formulations of not only what counts as secondary English but also what counts as research and how to characterize the nature of its implications in today's diverse, digitalized, globalized environment (CEE, 2005). As English educators counter demands at once political, empirical, and conceptual—contemplating powerful reforms on one hand and the expansive literacy demands of new times on the other (Hall, 1989/1996; Luke, 1998, 2004a, 2004b)—rethinking the familiar trope of English education research and practice as worlds apart is both necessary and overdue.

Long critiqued for their early tendency to conduct studies devoid of the messy dynamics of real students—their learning pushed, pulled, and shaped by classroom contexts and wider world alike (e.g., Grindstaff, 1987)—English education researchers have responded to proliferating challenges, pushing the horizons of their investigations ever wider in contemplating the many sets of activities, influences, and ways of seeing that compose literacy learning as doing. We turn now to address these investigations.

THEORY AND RESEARCH: TOWARD KNOWING WHAT TO KNOW

The movement of secondary English across time serves both as backdrop to and voice in dialogue with the field's research history, which has also provided views on what counts as secondary English, what students in secondary English can or should learn, and how teachers can or should contribute toward this learning. Research has been fueled by both popular and academic concerns for the reading and writing skills of an increasing diversity of students, as these bespeak society's changing notions of a fully realized citizenry as well as scholars' perspectives on what secondary English can accomplish for students. Furthermore, it has increasingly reflected the belief that if it is to make headway in helping to shape students as educated readers and writers, research must explore the nuances of classroom complexities to fully understand what it means to read and write in school contexts.

Research has relatedly been influenced by evolving theories about language and literacy from a number of humanist and social science disciplines that have lent increasingly social and cultural perspectives to the cognitive perspectives that were dominant in research the '70s and '80s. These theoretical lenses have helped researchers to develop more sharply tuned antennae for the ways secondary English—that is, reading, writing, and language in the guise of this secondary school subject—reflect and maintain broader social, cultural, and historical processes. Mirroring at least some of the field's historic movement, the research push has thus been toward a broader and richer understanding of the role of context in students' literacy and learning. Emerging in part in response to calls for more practice-sensitive research, these understandings have also complicated and extended notions of what it means for research to hold implications for practice.

We thus review research that has helped shape secondary English, keeping in mind the broadening sense of context—its role and its meaning in students' development as readers and writers—that this work has yielded. With researchers from a number of orientations often complementing and interanimating one another's work, the research lenses have variously narrowed and widened as researchers have focused on (a) students' minds and ways with literacy; (b) the local classroom dynamics of literacy teaching and learning; (c) the ways English teachers, students, and classrooms are situated socially, culturally, and historically; and (d) the challenges and opportunities of a globalized, digitalized, and multimodal world. Although these are not the only ways that researchers have focused and do not encompass every type of research that has been conducted, these foci draw attention to researchers' expanding conceptions of context and the attendant implications for classrooms, constructed in part as responses to the challenges of diverse populations, new technologies, and varied literacies.

Conceptually, these ways of focusing inevitably share fuzzy and permeable boundaries. Studies that have focused, for example, on individual students' minds and ways with literacy have not necessarily ignored broader social, cultural, and/or historical influences. But researchers have tended to foreground or background these factors to varying degrees, and it is what is foregrounded that our four-part succession is

intended to capture. Furthermore, any single focus has not been limited to research conducted in particular decades or influenced by particular theories, so each part of the four-part succession also encompasses research across decades and theories. In exploring research within these varied research foci, then, we sometimes traverse back and forth between decades and theories as we consider implications of this work in informing and shaping the field. We do not provide a comprehensive review or history of English education research or theory but, rather, offer key works through the years from influential theoretical perspectives, as well as more current instantiations of research in these traditions, that have contributed to rich and nuanced conceptions of secondary English in a diverse and changing world.

How Do We Understand Students' Minds and Ways With Literacy?

A focus on the minds and literacy habits of students has been strongly evident across the years, even before the midcentury cognitive revolution that would set research on individuals' thinking on a course of exponential expansion in the '70s and beyond. Concerned about the ways the range of secondary students read, write, and interpret literature, this work has rested on the assumption that such insights can lead to knowing both how to teach varied students and what to teach. Although the influence on students' literacy of their wider social and cultural experiences was often acknowledged in this work, its primary gaze was on individual students' more immediate understandings of particular literacy tasks.

Early research focusing on individual students attempted, from a range of theoretical perspectives, to describe their experiences with various aspects of secondary English curricula. The aim was usually to help shape these experiences to curricular goals. In the area of secondary literature, for example, much research centered on how students responded to and understood literary texts. This work was influenced in part by the humanistic literary tradition of New Criticism (Brooks, 1947; Ransom, 1941), which sought to discover the meanings believed to be encoded in texts through close readings and emphases on forms, language, and literary technique (a literary approach that had significantly entered into secondary classroom literature instruction by the '50s and '60; Grossman, 2001), and in part by then-newly-recognized reader-response theories (Rosenblatt, 1938), which, in prescient anticipation of more cognitively based studies of readers and reading that were to occur decades later, suggested that meaning lies within both the reader and the text and must be actively constructed by the reader interacting with text during the reading process (see Marshall, 2000). Although reader-response theory is more often associated with Deweyan progressivism, both approaches responded to the growing diversity of American schools and universities, endeavoring to render literary appreciation available beyond the confines of elite preparatory schools.

Attempting to foster such appreciation, I. A. Richards (1929), arguably one of English education's first teacher-researchers, studied his Cambridge students' readings, examining what they reported to think and feel about the poetry they read. This was also one of the first studies to provide empirical evidence that students' "personal situations" were factors in reading (cited in Beach, 1993, p. 16). Drawing on this

work as well as on reader-response theory (Rosenblatt, 1938), investigations in the 1960s into secondary students' responses to literature developed category systems to capture reported differences across reading experiences, sometimes sorting these into hierarchies in an effort to understand what influenced different students' readings (Marshall, 2000). Inspired by a humanistic sense of literary appreciation as well as by more social scientific urges to systematically quantify such appreciation, Squire's (1964) study of 9th- and 10th-graders' responses to short stories was a groundbreaker in this tradition, attempting to capture what students "think, feel, or react to at any moment" (p. 1) as they paused to answer questions at various points in the texts. Yet although he found that students responded to these stories in "unique and selective ways" (frontispiece)—influenced by personal experience, gender, and reading ability, for example—Squire notably valued responses that were in line with New Critical ways of "extracting" meaning from text. Emphasis on such close reading would extend into the coming decades; even as late as the '90s, Blau (1994) could say that the teaching of literature at the high school level often reflected such text-centered values.

Early research in other areas of English and language arts, shaped at least in part by researchers' recognition of diverse students' language needs and practices, examined students' literacy practices developmentally to discover those that appeared to serve students as they grew over time. Much of this work also took inspiration from both humanistic "appreciative" approaches to language as well as quantitative approaches to language phenomena emerging in disciplines such as linguistics and developmental psychology. Basing his work on the premise that just as in biological characteristics, so in language children must surely grow in predictable ways over time, Loban (e.g., 1976) followed one group of more than 200 students for 13 years (what he called a cross-section of students—boys and girls from different racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic status [SES] backgrounds) to identify (through interviews and examinations of their reading, writing, and speaking) stages of language and literacy development and significant changes in language features across time. However, the study tended to conflate SES with race and ethnicity, thereby viewing as one and the same the language characteristics of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and those associated with working-class speakers. One of the key findings was that students' oral syntax varied significantly by SES, the high-SES students employing what Loban determined to be more complex language as measured by how much it explicitly embedded syntactic structures; this syntax was equated with complexity of thought. The study promoted drills to instill in low-SES students what he called new habits, essentially those of the middle class.

Sociolinguistic studies being conducted at about the same time by linguists and scholars of color, which were to strongly influence English education research in subsequent years were showing such language characterizations to be theoretically naïve and ethnocentric. Labov's (1972) sociolinguistic studies of AAVE, for example, described in fine-grained detail the systematic, complex, and communicatively purposeful patterns of AAVE language features, including syntax and grammar, thereby challenging notions fed by popular opinion as well as academic shortsightedness that AAVE was

inferior to mainstream standard dialects or reflected inferior thinking. Other linguistic studies of AAVE, such as Mitchell-Kernan's (1973) and Smitherman's (1977), added to this characterization by systematically tracing the contribution to meaning—making of AAVE artistry and style. Indeed, two decades later, African American discourse in students' writing samples on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) writing exam were to correlate with high writing scores (Smitherman, 1994, reported in Meacham, 2000–2001). In light of such work, Loban's (1976) best contributions were less in his language characterizations than in his suggestion of the inevitability of variation in students' language and literacy based on what later researchers would examine as social and cultural influences and his arguing the need English education to speak to this variability. (A strong element of his research, too, was his commitment to studying the same students across a 13-year time period, a phenomenon that has never been duplicated in English education.)

Associated primarily with early cognitive studies, another research direction that proved influential to English education explored students' strategies and procedures during writing and reading. An illustrative early exploration of secondary students' writing, and perhaps the most familiar among professional English teacher groups (e.g., NCTE and NWP) was Emig's (1971) case studies of 12th graders, which showed not only that their composing was complex and nonlinear but also that it was highly influenced by the environments for which they composed. Emig followed eight 12th graders as they composed for school-assigned writing tasks and as they wrote for their own purposes; on the basis of interviews and students' taped accounts of these processes as well as examinations of their writing, Emig found that students followed different strategies depending on what they were writing and for what purposes. What she called school-sponsored writing proved to be especially stultifying to students' thinking and creativity, a key culprit being teachers' adherence to the school-ubiquitous five-paragraph essay across writing tasks and purposes. Emig's findings flagged issues of context as influencing students' writing strategies, thereby challenging notions that what students produced in the context of school was a mirror of their writing abilities and processes writ large.

Increasingly reaching audiences within both NCTE and AERA, research on the writing process was to take a more focused cognitive turn in a spate of studies that shined light on the constructivist premise that readers and writers construct meaning by "organizing, selecting, and connecting information" (Nystrand, Greene, & Wiemelt, 1993, p. 282) as part of complex literacy processes (the premise, as earlier indicated, of reader-response studies as well). Flower and Hayes's (1981; Hayes & Flower, 1980) studies with college students became familiar and enduring and were to help shape perceptions about teaching writing at all grade levels. Flower and Hayes's approaches, although drawing on cognitive theories, were also influenced both by rhetoric (which suggested that writers make choices and decisions about their rhetorical purpose and audience and in doing so deal with varied constraints on the shape and direction of their work) and by the problem-solving research of Newell and Simon (e.g., 1972) in psychology (which suggested that writing constitutes such

a problem-solving process). By studying college freshmen thinking out loud as they composed essays to researcher-determined writing prompts, Flower and Hayes traced students' composing ideas and strategies moment by moment, thereby developing a model of this process. The model described how—given immediate contextual constraints such as their “task environment,” that is, topic, audience, rhetorical exigencies, and evolving text—writers set rhetorical goals, plan ideas and text strategies, translate plans into text, and evaluate what they have thought about and written. The research suggested the need to understand the ways these processes might vary among skilled and unskilled writers and across writing tasks, and how pedagogy might foster the processes that skilled writers were seen to employ.

In their review of the research stemming from this work, Sperling and Freedman (2001) note that although these studies were able to describe expert and novice writing processes, they did not fully unpack either immediate or broader contextual influences on these processes and thus did not examine the contextual bearings on moving from unskilled to skilled levels (also see reviews of this work in Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1986). Yet these studies offered to practice an opportunity to think about individual students in the act of composing and complemented pedagogies (emerging especially in the United Kingdom) that approached the teaching of writing by focusing on writers' processes. Indeed, cognitively based research in writing was to continue through the decades into present time (see, for example, Olson & Land's [2007] study of cognitive-strategies approaches to teaching and learning writing).

Both at the time writing process research was getting a toehold in the writing research community as well as in later years, other researchers were taking stock of the application of process approaches in classrooms. Applebee (1986), for example, noted from his observational research that the notion of a writing process was sometimes narrowly construed in practice, becoming a rigid set of procedures rather than a way of thinking about what it means to write. The causes for this traditional approach to an essentially new pedagogy, Applebee maintained, were such practical realities of secondary schooling as the workload, time constraints, and challenge of student diversity. More than 15 years later, Scherff and Piazza (2005), conducting large-scale survey research of secondary school writing practices in Alabama, found that the constraints of other realities—specifically, state writing assessments and the rigidity of “pre-determined standards” (p. 271)—stacked the deck in favor of traditional practices based on drilling correct form over supporting students' reading and writing processes. Such accounts flag broader contextual constraints that shape day-to-day pedagogy; despite such challenges, writing process approaches (however well or fully they may have been enacted) became widespread in secondary English classrooms across the United States.

Cognitive perspectives also penetrated the area of reading, where a rich corpus of work was focusing on the individual reader engaging in comprehension processes. Bringing to bear a cognitive framework for thinking about comprehension and memory, scholars described an array of strategies by which readers construct and retain meaning from text, for example, drawing on text cues and prior knowledge to

comprehend text both literally and inferentially. Perhaps the most familiar reading comprehension models came from Anderson (e.g., 1994), Kintsch (e.g., 1998), and Meyer (e.g., 1975), much of this work developed at the federally funded Center for the Study of Reading that was established in 1976 to focus on cognitive approaches.

In Anderson's (1994) schema-theoretic model, the text was seen as a catalyst to a process in which readers' cognitive schemata provide ideational scaffolding, facilitate allocation of attention, and enable inferential elaboration across knowledge of text, language, and everyday and disciplinary experience; Kintsch (1998) described a process in which readers process words and sentences linearly, integrating new information into working memory with old and building representations of meaning (see Hamm & Pearson, 2002). Although this cognitive research did not always account for the environment in which reading occurred (as was the case with cognitive accounts of writing), cognitive studies of reading did move the field forward by enlightening both researchers and practitioners on the role of metacognition and knowledge of text structures in reading and writing processes. Moreover, they identified the crucial role of background knowledge and experiences in how readers understand written texts (see reviews in Barr, 2001; Calfee & Drum, 1986; Hamm & Pearson, 2002). Barr (2001), in fact, characterized this research as fairly consistent on this point, showing in her review of these studies that such knowledge is "trainable" (p. 396) in classroom experiences, with students' comprehension improved when teachers provide them with relevant background knowledge to their reading. On the basis of this early work, researchers would increasingly come to understand how cultural differences in background knowledge can lead readers to different interpretations of the same works (in subsequent sections, we provide research perspectives that have furthered these understandings). Such understandings of the cognitive dimensions of reading would inform efforts to enhance secondary reading teaching through to the present time (see, for example, Schoenbach, Greenleaf, Cziko, & Hurwitz, 1999).

The work discussed above focused on individual students and sought to understand the dimensions of reading and writing "inside students' heads." Researchers were to expand on this work in myriad ways by speaking more fully to the role of context in these reading and writing processes (see Bloome, 1987; Tierney & Pearson, 1983).

Helping to set the conceptual stage for such work were Scribner and Cole's (1981) studies of literacy among the Vai of Liberia. Clearly situated as cognitivists (in anthropology and psychology) in the late 1970s, Scribner and Cole assumed a critical stance on their early findings, looking beyond the individual as the unit of analysis to explore the contexts in which individuals functioned. They combined cognitively based experimental studies of text-based logic and thinking processes with ethnographic studies of the nature and uses of literacy in Vai society to study the connection between literacy and thinking, studying reading and writing as it occurred in varied home, school, and religious settings as tribe members enacted literacy in particular contexts.

Scribner and Cole (1981) were able to compare members' memory, logic, and analytic processes as these were associated with different literacy situations. Their

studies identified different forms of literacy with different cognitive skills, helping scholars to understand that the functions and purposes of writing and reading in different social contexts, including the context of school, might influence not only the nature of writing and reading but also the thinking processes associated with them.

Anticipating the burgeoning interest in sociocognitive and sociocultural as well as varied linguistic perspectives on thought and language (see Ball, 2002; Vasquez, 2006), which highlighted the importance of meaning-making contexts (a topic we take up in the next section), Scribner and Cole's (1981) work represented a widening of the research focus beyond the individual reader or writer toward the workings and functions of contexts in which reading and writing take place. This focus, stemming from varied complementary research traditions, was to include especially the social and linguistic dimensions of context that shape what counts as writing and reading in secondary school English (see Bloome, 1987; Green & Wallat, 1981; Rex, Green, Dixon, & the Santa Barbara Classroom Discourse Group, 1998).

How Do We Understand the Local Classroom Dynamics of Literacy Teaching and Learning?

Research focusing on local classroom contexts of literacy took hold in the late 1970s and 1980s, finding inspiration from multiple theoretical sources. These included ethnomethodological and sociolinguistic approaches that explored how language is constructed and used in varied social situations and among varied social groups, work that was applied in classrooms (e.g., Cazden, 2001; Green, 1983; Mehan, 1979; see review in Ball, 2002), and sociocognitive and sociocultural perspectives (e.g., Vygotsky, 1978, and later, Bakhtin, 1981) that were influencing English education researchers to better understand the role of language in learning and the role of others in students' literacy learning and development.

Much of the linguistic work explored classrooms as sites with their own discourse norms, roles, and conventions, with discourse shaping and displaying teachers and students' rights and responsibilities in varied literacy learning contexts. Key to English educators' understanding of classroom discourse were Mehan's (1979) studies of classroom lesson conventions, which described the deeply entrenched discourse patterns through which teachers dominate the discourse with their known-answer questions and evaluations of students' minimal responses—the IRE structure, in which teacher initiates, student responds, and teacher evaluates—reflecting not only teacher and student role differentials but also shaping and displaying traditionalist transmission approaches to teaching. (For a recent revisiting of Mehan and IRE sequences, see Macbeth, 2003).

In English education, this work was complemented by Vygotskian perspectives on learning, which focused on teacher–student verbal interactions as foundational to the literacy learning process. Such discourse patterns as the entrenched IRE would seem to stultify students' own participation in the learning process if learning was, as Vygotsky (1978) suggested, an interactive process that “presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them”

(p. 88). To explain the process of learning and development, Vygotsky used the metaphor of “buds” or “flowers” (p. 86) that, with assistance, will fruit into independent accomplishments. These buds or flowers, Vygotsky claimed, need to be nourished through classroom interactions, for through such interactions, teachers and students construct not only new knowledge and skills but also “the ideas, language, values, and dispositions” (Vasquez, 2006, p. 36) that reflect classroom culture.

English education researchers had, in the perspectives coming from both linguistic frameworks and from Vygotskian psychology, then, complementary lenses for exploring what goes on in classroom literacy learning when students interact with peers and teachers in reading, writing, and literary study. This research rested in part on the assumption that analyzing instructional discourse could make classroom dynamics visible and available to scrutiny and critique, thereby revealing avenues for change (see Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000).

A number of studies of classroom dynamics attempted to understand the effects of different social organizations of classrooms on students’ learning, from whole-class discussions, in which teachers were seen usually to dominate, to smaller groups or dyads. Questions centered on how patterns of language use in these contexts affect what counts as knowledge and what occurs as learning, how these patterns affect the equality or inequality of students’ learning opportunities, and what communicative competencies these patterns presume or foster (see Cazden, 2001, p. 3). Much of the research took the form of either qualitative case studies or ethnography and often drew on sociolinguistic methods influenced by linguistic anthropology (e.g., Cook-Gumperz, 2006; Gumperz, 1982) to explore the relationship between discourse patterns and what and how students learned literacy. Perspectives from linguistic anthropology allowed researchers to examine, for example, tacit language cues that contextualize meaning, such as teacher and student use of intonation patterns, prosody, and nonverbal cues, exploring how and whether participants from different language or cultural backgrounds picked up on or ignored such cues and what was gained or lost as a result.

Together with linguistic perspectives on broader teacher–student interaction structures (e.g., Sinclair & Coulthard’s [1975] research on what they called IRF—initiation, response, and feedback), this work led to two general observations. The first was that teachers and students who followed the same tacit discourse cues were seen to engage in smoother and sometimes more productive learning interactions, whether these were whole-class discussions or smaller configurations (e.g., Cazden, 2001; Michaels & Cazden, 1986). And the second was that it was particularly difficult for even excellent teachers to move beyond IRE recitation structures in class discussions (Athanases, 1993, 1998).

These notions formed the premise for research examining teacher–student discourse in different areas of secondary English, including writing and literary study. Much research examining teaching–learning discourse was in the area of writing, where modes of teacher response beyond traditional markings on student papers were being explored, for example, using teacher–student writing conferences and peer

response groups (see Hillocks, 2006; Sperling & Freedman, 2001). Closely examining the discourse of peer response groups (see review in DiPardo & Freedman, 1988) or teacher–student writing conferences (see reviews in Prior, 1998; Sperling, 1998), researchers often found that in these configurations, traditional teacher-dominated classroom patterns could give way to more conversational and collaborative interactions in which students, with one another or with their teacher, might discover and together solve writing issues and problems as they built on one another’s talk to negotiate writing information and strategies.

Yet many case studies were showing, too, that these varied configurations could not guarantee such collaborative approaches to learning. Conversations were often seen to be marked by miscommunication and missed opportunities for learning or to more resemble teacher monologues than dialogues, especially when teachers pressed to get across their own agendas for students’ work (Sperling, 1998). When such studies of classroom discourse were grounded in larger classroom ethnographies, researchers were able also to show that the ways different discourse configurations worked depended greatly on the ethos of the greater classroom context (Athanases & Heath, 1995). “Response-rich” classrooms, for example, were seen often to nurture more dialogic exchanges for students to reflect on and interpret their own writing strategies (Sperling & Freedman, 2001).

Despite at least some research showing the possibilities of reorganizing classroom interaction configurations, such as using small groups or teacher–student dyads, however, when word about these varied configurations was beginning to infiltrate professional conversations (for example, at meetings of NCTE and NWP), even very capable teachers reported difficulties making them work and thus only occasionally used them (Freedman, 1987). Indeed, a good 10 years after this research was being reported, Nystrand (1997) found that dialogic classrooms of the kind that incorporated more collaborative configurations were, at least across the United States, still rare. Despite some notable exceptions, the entrenched patterns, enacting wonted social relationships between teachers and students and traditional notions of teaching and learning, did not easily disappear.

The studies reported above were focused case studies and ethnographies. Large-scale studies of local classroom dynamics have been scant but have tended to provide compatible findings; these include national data on English teaching practices, such as the data gathered by the NAEP studies (e.g., Applebee, Langer, Mullis, Latham, & Gentile, 1994) that reflected teachers’ reports of the kinds of configurations they used in their English classes. These data have tended to show that peer groups and teacher–student dyads in secondary English, if they have existed at all, have more consistently characterized suburban middle-class schools than others. (See also Gamoran & Carbonaro, 2002.)

In an exemplary large-scale study, Nystrand (1997) and colleagues brought sociocognitive and sociocultural theoretic perspectives to a range of classrooms reflecting a range of teaching epistemologies. The study reflected the rise of Bakhtin in English education research, with his theories on language and learning not only compatible

with Vygotsky's but also extending and enriching Vygotsky's perspectives. Gee (2000–2001), discussing both Vygotsky and Bakhtin, for example, asserted,

Vygotsky shows how people's individual minds are formed out of, and always continue to reflect, social interactions in which they engaged as they acquired their "native" language or later academic languages in school. Bakhtin stresses how anything anyone thinks or says is, in reality, composed of bits and pieces of language that have been voiced elsewhere, in other conversations or texts. . . . For Bakhtin, what one means is always a product of both the meanings words have "picked up" as they circulate in history and society and one's own individual "take" or "slant" on these words (at a given time and place). (pp. 114–115)

Drawing on this theoretical lens, Nystrand (1997) framed his study, which focused on classroom dynamics in the teaching and learning of literature, with Bakhtin's (e.g., 1981) conception of the relationship of discourse to thought: Because discourse is "dialogic," which is to say, "structured by tension, even conflict" between conversants, "one voice 'refracts' another . . . [and] it is precisely this tension—this relationship between self and other . . . that . . . lies at the heart of understanding as a dynamic, sociocognitive event" (Nystrand, 1997, p. 8). Nystrand (1997) examined more than 100 eighth- and ninth-grade English and language arts classrooms in urban, suburban, and rural communities across the United States, drawing not only on survey data but also on interviews and discourse analyses of spoken and written interactions observed in those classrooms. His study supported what the numerous case studies had been suggesting, that students can learn English and language arts most meaningfully in dialogic classrooms; moreover, it provided evidence that forms of discourse might be related to concept development (Wertsch, 1991, as cited in Nystrand, 1997).

This research supported the efficacy, then, of what Nystrand (1997) framed as genuine dialogue across communicative contexts, from class discussions marked by teachers' open-ended questions and uptake of students' ideas into discussion to written dialogue-journals about literary readings. Nystrand's study offered ways to see both the state of literature instruction from a national perspective and the potential of fresh theoretic conceptions to push against traditional patterns of classroom discourse. (For similar arguments, see Bakhtinian studies in Ball & Freedman, 2004; and Vygotskian studies in Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000.)

Concern about classroom dynamics, as reflected in the studies above, was centrally connected to concern about diverse learners (see Green, 1983). As Cazden (2001) suggested, if education is to serve diverse students, one must carefully pay attention to who speaks and who receives thoughtful responses. Progenitors for this work were studies in ethnography of communication and sociolinguistics (e.g., Hymes, 1977) that addressed the extent to which students' diverse home and community discourses in literacy match those of mainstream classrooms (Cook-Gumperz, 1986, 2006; Gilmore & Glatthorn, 1982; Treuba, Guthrie, & Au, 1981). These studies showed that mismatch of discourses could lead to missed opportunities for learning and to teachers' misconstruals of students' abilities. This issue was paramount in Heath's (1983) 10-year ethnography, grounded in cultural anthropology, which explored language

and literacy in the homes and communities of working-class African Americans and Whites in the Carolina Piedmont. Heath described in this study how discourse dynamics of reading and writing in different facets of community life differed both between these communities and as she set them against White middle-class schools.

Cazden (2001) and colleagues, too, centered their studies in these home-school mismatch concerns and showed both how the classroom discourse dynamics that she and colleagues explored in different classrooms tended to echo those found in middle-class White homes and communities and how African American and other students of color had difficulty entering into these classroom discourses. Cazden drew on diverse theories, analytic strategies, and kinds of empirical research to show the complexity of classroom discourse and difficulty in shaping it to diverse students' discourse and learning needs, especially when teachers were being encouraged to rely less on IRE structures and to add the kinds of nontraditional discussions that serve to foster students' thinking and learning. This work also, importantly, showed how teachers' and students' language and cultural backgrounds could strongly influence what is viewed as appropriate or useful classroom talk.

The notion of cultural appropriateness, and how classroom dynamics shape and maintain what is seen to be appropriate, has sat at the center of a number of studies in secondary English, including the study of literature (Underwood, Yoo, & Pearson, 2006). Studies of secondary literature teaching that have explored classrooms in which reader-response theories focus instruction have found that the ways students discuss their literary responses are heavily influenced by the predominant White middle-class conventions of schooling, including ways of talking and of writing (Marshall, 2000).

In her review of reading research, Barr (2001) has suggested that although the "conceptual center" (p. 401) of reading research has for some time been on students' response to literature, in practice, organizing instruction so all students have a chance to respond is not easy and is a problem exacerbated by the reality that classroom dynamics privilege certain ways of responding over others. Grossman (2001) has suggested that the IRE script strongly structures students' responses to literature, with teachers' questions designed not to tap students' own responses so much as to shape their skills at text-centered "close readings" and students getting few opportunities to construct interpretations of their own. This work supports Nystrand's (1997) findings of teacher-dominated literature discussions, directing discussions to develop particular kinds of literary interpretations over others.

Focus on discussion format has yielded a variety of insights. Alvermann and colleagues (1996) found that middle school and high school students were aware of the norms and responsibilities contributing to productive discussions, including all students' contributing to talk (reported in Grossman, 2001). Altering discussion format so that students discuss literature in small groups has been found to encourage more student talk, although as with writing discussions, these have also been found to mirror larger classroom discourse or to exacerbate status differences between students (Grossman, 2001). Echoing the field's past, this body of research has shown

that even practices that many would deem progressive (for example, reader-response literature pedagogy) have often been shaped by conservative and deeply rooted cultural forces as instantiated through traditional classroom discourse patterns—and have been not-so-paradoxical reminders that new wine can be readily stored in traditional bottles.

These studies used a variety of complementary theoretical perspectives and research approaches to allow the research community to understand the discursive underpinnings of day-to-day classroom dynamics. Classroom dynamics have tended to follow traditional IRE scripts and have tended often to shape traditional approaches to reading and writing; yet when altered, they have resulted in dialogic discourse, allowing students to construct and negotiate meanings and interpretations as they read and write (see, e.g., Alvermann et al., 1996). These studies have also shown how immediate social and cultural contexts shape ways with words and thinking, sharing intellectual affinity with studies that have been widening their focus to consider the broader social, cultural, and political contexts of English teaching and learning.

How Do We Understand How English Teachers, Students, and Classrooms Are Situated Socially, Culturally, and Historically?

As studies of classroom dynamics showed, context reflects socially, culturally, and historically embedded beliefs and values that shape the nature and consequences of literacy practices and learning. As secondary English has attempted to be responsive to diversity and change, researchers have opened up theoretical orientations and research approaches to better capture context's shaping power. Fine-tuned examinations of context have sat side by side with more macro-level analyses, allowing researchers to encompass in their thinking about English teachers, students, and classrooms requisite issues of identity, membership, and power. Research has drawn on psychological and sociocultural theories as well as newer outgrowths of these that allow complex contextual understandings. Activity theory has been particularly prominent, viewing behavior in terms of the contexts in which behavior occurs, and accounting for how the motives of varying settings shape the goals of these settings and determine which activities and behaviors will be maximized or minimized to accomplish these goals (see Beach, Green, Kamil, & Shanahan, 2005; Wertsch, 1985). Different types of studies have sat side by side, complementing one another and helping to create a larger portrait of secondary English as contextually situated. Case studies and ethnographies have proliferated, with multiple data sources and modes of analyzing data adding to understandings of the beliefs, values, urges, and constraints related to secondary English teachers, students, and classrooms (see Marshall, 2000; Sperling & Freedman, 2001).

Such work sits amid research on the status of the field in which the old tensions between conservative and progressive views continue to show up—for example, in a secondary English literary canon that has changed only at glacial speed (see, e.g., Applebee, 1993), persistently reflecting a predominately White and male sensibility (e.g., Agosto, Hughes-Hassell, & Gilmore-Clough, 2003; Stallworth, Gibbons, &

Fauber, 2006). Yet contrary to what might be taken as these studies' implications of intractable curricular conservatism, a growing body of work has shown that the picture is not that simple.

A number of studies endeavoring to penetrate the contextual nuances of secondary English have centered on teachers, probing their beliefs and self-identities to better understand what drives instructional decisions and why. In their research reviews related to English education, Barr (2001), focusing on reading, and Grossman (2001), focusing on literature, have shown the close relationship between teachers' practices and their beliefs about literacy and learning. Grossman shows how teachers' literary orientations—these being primarily either text centered or reader centered—determine how teachers teach literature to their students, a finding supported by qualitative case studies based on interview and observation as well as large-scale survey studies (e.g., Applebee, 1993; Purves, 1981). Studies of teachers in the United States have consistently found few teachers to have other orientations to literature, such as critical orientations as fostered in Australia (e.g., Musspratt, Luke, & Freebody, 1997)—for example, critical feminist or Marxist orientations—that would lend social, cultural, historical, and political perspective to texts and ways readers read (Appleman, 2000). Likewise, critical genre approaches to both reading and writing—centering on the ways conventions of genre are related to cultural norms and values—have had more influence in Canada and Australia than in the United States (see review by Cope & Kalantzis, 1993).

Many studies probing teachers' beliefs have taken a psychological approach (as exemplified by Shulman, 1987), relating what teachers know about secondary English content, pedagogy, students, and learning to what occurs in classrooms. The premise of these studies has been that how one teaches English grows from different understandings of the nature of writing, literature, and learning to write and read.

Hillocks (1999), following in this tradition, investigated how secondary and community college teachers made sense of English by exploring their beliefs about English as well as their beliefs about students' capacities to learn. By interviewing them and observing them teach, Hillocks found teachers' epistemologies about literary reading to be a major influence on what they chose to teach and how. These teachers reflected a range of literary epistemologies, but the dominant epistemology among the group was "current traditional rhetoric" (Berlin, 1982), encompassing New Critical approaches to literature and teaching with the assumption that "reality must be [and can be] apprehended directly through the senses" (Hillocks, 1999, p. 111). Hillocks (1999) tried to change these teachers' practices through intensive seminar readings of contemporary literacy research; what he found, however, was stability in their practices, not the hoped-for change. Hamel (2003), in case studies of teachers conducted from the perspective of reading development as well as literary study, found that teachers' own experienced ways of reading literature *qua* literature prevented them from considering how students' basic reading skills and knowledge were related to their literary readings. Such studies demonstrate the need to unpack teachers' epistemologies, and although researchers such as Hillocks have

worked with teachers toward developing new ways of seeing their teaching and their students' learning, this line of work has also suggested the need to work with teachers in multiple ways over time to do so.

Other studies of secondary English teachers have demonstrated that teachers' identities as decision makers in the classroom can be fluid and are ultimately subject not only to their underlying epistemologies about what constitutes reading and writing, and knowledge and learning, at given moments but also to their own positioning in relation to students and the culture of classrooms and schools. Research has underscored the ways varying and sometimes competing conceptions about reading and writing, knowledge and learning, can live side by side as teachers navigate such often-contradictory influences on their teaching and thinking as high-stakes assessments of their students' reading and writing, school-level evaluations of their teaching, English department policies and practices, district and state policies, their own ways of reading and writing, and their own professional development experiences (e.g., Franzak, in press; Johnson, Smagorinsky, Thompson, & Fry, 2003; Marshall, Smagorinsky, & Smith, 1995; Sperling, 2004).

Studies that have looked at a range of influences on teachers' thinking and practices have been able to offer highly nuanced teacher portraits. Drawing on activity theory, Johnson et al. (2003), for example, provided a longitudinal look at one case-study teacher's persistence in teaching the five-paragraph essay to eighth graders, exploring competing influences on her beliefs and the logic of her ultimate decisions. The researchers followed her from preservice years to first years of teaching, tracing through multiple data sources the evolution of this persistence. Enacting one kind of researcher-practitioner connection—in this case the teacher was at the end of the study part of the research team—the study raised questions about what influences might compel different teachers to identify with certain norms and standards versus others, underscoring in this way broad-based social, cultural, and political dimensions of teacher identity.

Studies of teachers have been complemented by numerous studies of students. Drawing on a range of theories of literacy, teaching, and learning, these too have offered varied and nuanced portraits of students as contextually situated, many of these destabilizing conventional categories or labels (as applied to student ability, for example, or to SES and race). Some of this work has explored influences on students' reading and writing by tracing their interactions with texts, peers, and teachers in classroom settings. In the area of secondary literature, a number of such studies have explored students enacting their membership in what Fish (1980) called "interpretive communities," that is, the sociocultural contexts in which students read—which as Marshall (2000) pointed out is quite different from focusing on individual students' psychology. Marshall's review shows how cultural norms and values situate students' conceptions of what constitutes different genres of literature, their beliefs in the power of literature to affect their views on issues, and their choices for what to read. As indicated in the previous section on studies of the dynamics of literary response, Marshall's (2000) review also shows that students' responses to literature,

including how they talk and write about literature, are influenced by the norms, values, and preoccupations of their cultural context.

Much of the research focusing on context has been ethnographic, with researchers immersing themselves in the communities in which students live and learn. Finders (1997), for example, followed both working- and middle-class girls engaging in school literacy practice (including those sanctioned and not sanctioned by teachers) as well as out-of-school literacy practices, making connections between the norms and expectations of gender, social class, and age in shaping these girls' literacies across in-school and out-of-school contexts. She showed that what and how they read and wrote served to display and construct their classed and gendered identities, including their social and school relationships.

Fairbanks and Ariail (2006), in an ethnography including case studies of three adolescent girls, drew on theories of positioning and identity to explore the social, cultural, and political meanings underlying the kinds of social and cultural resources that each girl brought to literacy and schooling and the consequences of these resources to their literacy learning. Dressman, Wilder, and Connor (2005) used multiple methodological approaches, gathering ethnographic as well as quantitative data, to trace the personal and academic histories of eight adolescents' struggles with literacy, finding the sources of their struggles to be varied and tangled and causing the researchers to assert that any one theoretical account of such struggles is inadequate to explain them.

Another area that has drawn on varied theories of literacy and learning is the study of students in nontraditional activities inside and outside school contexts, with scholars exploring how context connects to what students' texts are and how they are produced and considering implications for building and extending theoretic conceptions of literacy engagement, performance, and learning. Within this area of study, DiPardo and Schnack (2004) studied intergenerational writing in an eighth-grade English project, Fisher (2003) studied spoken-word poetry performances in community settings, and Mahiri (2005) and colleagues studied literacies in different urban settings. Still other researchers of literacy practices explored students' meaning making by raising awareness of language. For example, Lee (1993) explored connections between students' literary understanding and their knowledge of the African American discourse practice of "signifying" (a study we take up later); Fecho and Meacham (2007) explored connections between literacy and hip-hop; and Morrell (2004a) studied apprenticing urban youth as critical researchers of literacy practices.

Responding to students' diverse social and cultural worlds, the above studies showed students inquiring into and theorizing about meaning making and school experience as they connected their lived-in and familiar worlds to developing knowledge and skills in language and literacy. Such explorations have taken reading and writing beyond traditional English classroom definitions, not necessarily to promote in classrooms the literacy activities of nontraditional contexts—although some research (e.g., DiPardo & Schnack, 2004; Fecho & Meacham, 2007; Lee, 1993) did just that—but to understand the literacy skills and knowledge that students bring to bear in these contexts and to what ends. These studies weigh the place and function of such knowledge and skills in the

English class and suggest by contrast how secondary English can constrain students' skills and knowledge in narrow construals of what counts as literacy in a socially, culturally, and linguistically diverse and changing world.

Many of these studies viewed teachers, students, and classrooms through a critical lens, exposing the ways historic privileging profoundly affects what counts as knowledge and learning. A growing body of work has taken critical lenses explicitly to studying teachers, students, and classrooms. Drawing on Gee's (1992) notion that discourse is in effect an "identity kit" (p. 21) that reflects and shapes social roles, Hartman's (2006) case study of working-class White girls in their high school English course revealed the mismatch between the classed and gendered discourses of the girls and those of their school and the effects of this mismatch in constraining how the girls participated and made meaning as readers of literature and students in secondary English.

In another study, Moje and Lewis (2007) drew on activity theory and critical discourse analysis (e.g., Fairclough, 1992)—the analysis of discourse to unpack language's shaping of privilege and identity—to examine the ways writing and speaking of an eighth-grade English language arts class constructed classroom identities, social and power relationships, and literacy knowledge. They found that students' learning was constrained by their unwillingness to speak against prevailing cultural models and discourses.

Taking a critical lens to students' writing, a number of scholars have exposed the racialization of schooling by studying students' narratives of self (e.g., Quoroz, 2001; Schultz, Buck, & Niesz, 2005), that is, students' written stories exploring their identities and educational experiences. Such narratives have been shown to expose schooling's silencing of different racial groups and normalizing other negative experiences in the fabric of everyday school structure and experience.

Many of the studies reviewed in this section have highlighted not only the reciprocal relationship between literacy learning and the cultural and social practices of classrooms and communities (see Gutierrez & Stone, 2000) but have also shed light on the ways these practices are located in relation to the practices granted privilege in the broader culture. Much of this work suggests that different ways with literacy and discourse maintain gender, race, and class differentials rooted in the broader culture (see also, in this regard, Prendergast's [2003] critique of Heath's [1983] study) but that there are ways to address this problem by exposing it to students and studying it.

How to work against historically rooted constraints remains a serious question, continuing to inform research conducted by university-based and schools-based researchers alike (e.g., Fecho, Allen, Mazaros, & Inyega, 2006; Greene & Abt-Perkins, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Such studies highlight the suppression of race-class-gender issues in classrooms as well as the challenging task of exploring these silences in both classroom research and practice. These studies have contributed to a growing view of the complexity facing teachers and students as researchers have attempted to understand the consequential nature of life in secondary English as it sits within broader school and nonschool contexts. The studies also make apparent the need for researchers to examine

secondary English and its contextual groundings over time, employing varied methods and drawing on varied theoretical lenses that continue to help shift the angle of vision from students and teachers as individuals to students, teachers, texts, and contexts interanimating one another across changing social, cultural, and political landscapes.

How Do We Understand and Address the Literacy Challenges and Opportunities of a Globalized, Digitalized, Multimodal World?

Recent studies tracing adolescents' participation in digital multimedia have both drawn on and challenged conceptions of the shaping power of context, presenting a socially and economically diffuse world in which the challenge of ensuring satisfying personal, civic, and vocational futures has taken on new complexities (Kress, Jewitt, & Tsatsarelis, 2000). Providing glimpses of the fluid, globally distributed spaces that compose the milieu of digital literacies, this work suggests the potential of new and emerging tools (e.g., instant messaging, online journaling, wikis, chat spaces, and so on) to extend communication across space, time, and culture (Lam, 2004; Leander & McKim, 2003; Leander & Sheehy, 2004; Rowsell & Pahl, 2007; Stein, 2007). This potential carries important consequences not only for young people's language and literacy learning but also for the emergence of affiliations and identities that "cut across national, ethnic, and linguistic lines" (Lam, 2006a). Furthermore, as researchers explore adolescents' uses of these new tools in particular contexts, the field is continuing to weigh the implications of a semiotic "design" conception of literacy (New London Group, 1996) and the concomitant notion that digital multimedia provide "not just a new way to make meaning, but a different kind of meaning" (Hull & Nelson, 2005, p. 225).

A number of studies have highlighted the potential of digital literacies in fostering motivation, creativity, and connection (e.g., Guzzetti & Gamboa, 2005; Hull & Nelson, 2005; Knobel & Lankshear, 2007; C. Lewis & Fabos, 2005). Recent examinations of culturally and linguistically diverse students' online practices are challenging English education teachers and researchers to rethink traditional conceptions of personhood, offering contextualized glimpses of digital contact zones and hybridized identities. In her studies of bilingual chat and anime spaces, for example, Lam (2004, 2006b) has provided portraits of adolescents inventing transnational ways with words and presentations of self as they forge connections with fellow participants half a world away; similarly concerned with issues of power, diversity, and identity, Stein (2004, 2007) has examined South African youths' engagement in multimodality in postapartheid classrooms emphasizing criticality.

What is at stake in terms of teaching and learning involves more than promoting facility with new technological tools—for as social-cultural literacy researchers have long maintained, it is the nature and purpose of their use rather than tools alone that shape their consequences (Greenleaf, 1994). Studies of new technologies are therefore often informed by how they are taken up by young people in the context of "globalization"—that is, the "movement of capital, labor, media, technologies, images, ideas, and symbolic mediums such as language across geographical and social spaces" (Lam, 2006a, p. 215)—with its accompanying demands for creativity,

collaboration, and innovation (Kalantzis, Cope, & the Learning by Design Project Group, 2005). Such work offers opportunities to think beyond the commercial hype surrounding new technologies, inviting teachers and researchers alike to reflect on young people's engagement with these multimodal venues and to consider what their participation suggests by way of expanded perspectives on the nature of context, identity, culture, and text.

Although much of the existing work on youth participation in digital literacies has taken place in out-of-school settings (e.g., Hull & Katz, 2006; Hull & Nelson, 2005; Mahiri, 2004; Morrell, 2004b), researchers have drawn on their findings to argue the need to integrate new media in classrooms in conceptually grounded and reflective ways (see Hull & Schultz, 2002; Stein, 2007). A recurrent theme in this work has been the need to foster criticality concerning the texts (and authors) that students encounter in their online travels. In a study of classroom uses of the Internet, for instance, Fabos (2004) observed students inundated with commercial content that sometimes found its way into their "research" projects.

Frequently, studies of students' online literacies conclude with arguments for fostering active reflection as part of students' digital sensibilities particularly (e.g., Lam, 2006b; Stein, 2004) and perusals of new media generally (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000). The stakes are especially high for less advantaged youth, who are likely to enjoy diminished access to digital literacies in their out-of-school lives; for instance, in his comparison of well-funded laptop programs in schools in more and less affluent communities, Warschauer (2006) found programs in wealthier areas to be consistently more effective in promoting student participation and learning. Where online tools are appropriated to a traditional teacher-centered ethic—an ethic arguably more likely to prevail in schools serving less advantaged youth—their potential to foster meaningful engagement has been seen as compromised (Knobel & Lankshear, 2006).

In addition to extending conceptions of context, community, and classroom, digital literacies are also challenging the English educators' traditional focus on the primacy of language. Even as "literacy" is becoming a too-expansive metaphor for understandings and representations of all kinds (Kress, 2000), researchers are increasingly arguing that semiotic expansion is inevitable and, indeed, already taking place in the world beyond schools. Drawing on the early work of the New London Group (1996) as well as subsequent efforts to extend and enact these ideas (e.g., Kalantzis et al., 2005), a new wave of English education research is beginning to suggest ways that the school subject might be reimagined with an eye to fostering critical and creative approaches to multimodal understanding and design (Beach, 2006).

English educators are increasingly noting the power of the transformation taking place all around us—not just in terms of textual tools but also in literacy practices and their personal, economic, and political repercussions—although efforts to study multimodal texts and practices and to chart implications for classroom practice remain in their infancy (Hull & Nelson, 2005).

Efforts to understand and address the challenges and opportunities of these new technological, social, and global contexts are meanwhile beset with questions as old as

the field of English education. Although theorists are beginning to build conceptual frameworks (Kress, 2003) that can usefully guide research into multimodal teaching and learning (Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Kress et al., 2005), the larger issues are all too familiar, albeit infused with higher stakes than ever: What should English as school subject ultimately accomplish? What kinds of people, citizens, and workers should it help create? How does one reconcile contemporary calls for a more creative, innovative, collaborative, globally minded workforce with the traditional view of English as stable skill set and knowledge of a Western canon? As English education researchers endeavor to address an expanding array of activities, texts, and settings, drawing on the field's diverse scholarly traditions is in many ways an easier task than crossing the bridge to practice, with its concomitant uncertainties concerning what English will or should be in the fluid, dynamic, globalized contexts of another new century (Lam, 2006a; Sefton-Green, 2006).

A Closing and an Opening: Toward Expanding Directions

As this brief overview of major trends has suggested, "English education research" has become a multiplicity of complementary perspectives, approaches, lenses, and tools. And although the field's growing variety is in some ways indicative of the differing epistemologies and agendas continually in play whenever the purpose, contours, and ends of "English" have been taken up, it is tempting to cast the varied developments in the field during the past quarter-century in modernist terms of inexorable progress with a definable end. Reflective of its own social and cultural context, English education research has offered increasingly nuanced and generative perspectives on reading and writing both responding to changing times and helping meaningfully to shape them and our vision of them. In these contexts, we find promise and possibility for continued shaping and reshaping of research–practice integrations.

Yet much remains to be learned concerning the nature of the research–practice connection in English education. Although the understandings teachers take away from their immediate readings of research have been studied at some length (e.g., Bartels, 2003; Gitlin, Barlow, Burbank, Kauchak, & Stevens, 1999; Kennedy, 1997, 1999; Zeuli, 1994), given the social-cultural, critical, and semiotic turns in literacy studies in recent years, the field is well positioned to explore the understandings teachers are constructing in light of the myriad influences that inform their long-term planning and moment-by-moment practices. Too often, policymakers have clung to the naïve belief that a given study can provide transportable "how-tos"—as if knowledge were stable and transmittable through prescriptive training. In the case of English education, the uncertainty concerning what research has to offer is multiplied exponentially—not only because of historic debate concerning what the field is or should be and attendant notions concerning the role of research and researchers, but now also because of this array of lenses and vantage points. In developing this review of empirical trends commonly regarded as rich with implications for practice, we were abidingly aware that relatively little is known concerning the extent to which

these implications have actually been realized, let alone what that process of realization has entailed.

The amount of theorizing and research that awaits in this regard is formidable and surely beyond the scope of this chapter. As we draw this chapter to a close, however, we offer a few glimpses of new realizations, instances where research and teaching have intertwined, showing us expanding views of both research and practice, as each better understands the world of the other.

BEYOND BRIDGING: EXEMPLARS OF INTEGRATION

Further countering the research–practice great-divide narrative, a number of English education’s professional leaders—both university-based scholars and classroom teachers—have engaged in work that has challenged with particular emphasis the tendency to cast research and practice as worlds apart. We offer these brief portraits not as taxonomy or comprehensive guide to such efforts but, rather, generative instances of long-term collaborations that exemplify more than the well-worn metaphor of the research–practice “bridge” affords, offering knowledge both for and of practice.

Researchers as Teachers

The tradition of university-based researchers working in K–12 classrooms to build, enact, and refine theories of learning dates back to Brown’s (1992) pioneering “design experiments.” Although a number of literacy educators have written about the challenging experience of reentering classroom teaching (e.g., Cazden, 1992; Dudley-Marling, 1997; Mahiri, 2004), such accounts at the secondary level are relatively rare. Given the many constraints on high school English teachers’ work—the paperload, accountability pressures, and a widening achievement gap among students ill served by the system along the way—the passage from ivory tower to the untidy bustle of compulsory schooling can be overwhelming (Scherff & Kaplan, 2006).

Working with real adolescents in real schools demands a commitment of time and energy that can undermine scholarly productivity—or, alternatively, as in the work of the researcher-teacher we briefly sketch here, function at once as matrix and catalyst. Building on her prior work exploring culturally responsive approaches to language arts pedagogy for African American students, Northwestern University’s Carol Lee (2001, 2007a) developed the multiyear Cultural Modeling Project, in which she participated not only as theorist and researcher but also as public-school teacher and colleague. Designed to help speakers of AAVE understand the relevance of their everyday linguistic practices and cognitive resources to literary study, the Cultural Modeling Project fostered intellectual communities engaged in rigorous exploration of complex issues. In her own daily classroom teaching, Lee drew on microethnographic (Green & Dixon, 1994) and neo-Vygotskian notions of situated learning to draw students into increasingly participatory stances in challenging class discussions (Lave & Wenger, 1991). As Lee modeled analytic strategies demanding close attention to texts, she emphasized connections between literary interpretation and students’ everyday worlds. By explicitly naming the proficiencies represented in such AAVE practices as

signifying and rapping, Lee rendered these language-play strategies available tools in approaching literary texts. She gradually stepped back as students stepped in, engaging in dynamic discussions of literary characters, language, and connections to their own worlds.

Lee (2001) is quick to point out that the process was far from smooth or easy. As her students left the school's "rowdy, noisy" halls and entered Lee's classroom, they brought along well-reified beliefs that little would be expected of them beyond factual recall and obedience. Ensuring that even the most reluctant students participate takes "a great deal of energy" (p. 118), Lee allowed, acknowledging that students "actively resisted" her efforts from Day 1 (p. 133). Even their richest moments could seem overwhelming to a less culturally attuned teacher, as a rising decibel level and overlapping talk signaled their growing engagement.

Staying the course with these young people involved more than adherence to a set of abstract beliefs. Rather, Lee (2001) saw these young people

as she saw her own biological children, for whom failure is simply not an option. She had to appreciate the humanity of these young people, their innate talents, and their infinite ability to learn, grow, and develop. They could not garner enough resistant behavior to deter her determination that they would learn and master intellectually difficult problem solving. (p. 133)

Lee's research, theory building, and teaching offer not just new cognitive strategies but a vibrant look into a challenging urban classroom. Lee brought mind, hand, and heart to this work, melding the work of theory building and implementation—at the levels of her own classroom as well as those of the school colleagues with whom she closely collaborated—into a seamless whole.

Teachers as Researchers

Nowhere have traditional conceptions of "teachers" and "researchers" been more vigorously challenged than in English education, where the teacher-research movement has found advocacy and support from AERA and the Teacher Research Special Interest Group, NCTE (see Stock, 2005), and NWP (2007). Although this work is too ample and wide-ranging to allow full treatment, we offer three brief snapshots that illustrate the potential of teacher research to inform English classroom practice—three boundary-blurring instantiations of what Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) have called "inquiry as stance" (p. 18).

In *Teacher Research for Better Schools* (Mohr et al., 2004), a K–12 network of Virginia teachers explored the implications of their investigations across multiple school sites. Led by veteran teachers who functioned as colleagues as well as coaches, these teacher-researchers found their appetite for "useful theory" (p. 9) whetted as they pursued their own local inquiries; that is, as they became creators as well as consumers of research, they found that their own research informed their understandings of published research and vice versa. At one participating high school, teachers collaborated with school administrators to use their findings to enhance student achievement and effectively implement a new ninth-grade block schedule; at another, teacher-researchers

participated in program assessment, professional development, and school planning. It is regrettable that funding for such work has diminished in the years since, as *Teacher Research for Better Schools* so compellingly demonstrates the potential of practitioner inquiry to enrich the evidence base guiding local decisions concerning curricula, programming, and teacher development.

The Brookline Teacher Researcher Seminar (BTRS) is perhaps best known through the publications of its elementary members, though this long-running Boston-area group encompassed high school instructors as well. Guided in the initial years by work with local sociolinguists such as Sarah Michaels and Courtney Cazden, BTRS's regular gatherings came to include visits from a diverse and distinguished roster of scholars, including Shirley Brice Heath, James Gee, Lisa Delpit, Vivian Paley, Sylvia Ashton-Warner, and Douglas Barnes (BTRS, 2004). As high school teacher Roxanne Pappenheimer (2004) exemplifies, BTRS research often focused on dilemmas, mysteries, and unresolved problems. When a student teacher engaged Pappenheimer's special-education English class in a discussion of M. E. Kerr's (1987) young-adult novel *Night Kites*, she was uneasily aware that the book's attention to homophobia would likely elicit highly charged responses. The classroom conversations that Pappenheimer went on to record and analyze took often unexpected turns, including imaginative dramatizations and searching attention to the many questions of values, ethics, and roles that the book raises. Pappenheimer found these events both heartening and provocative, turning back to her own teaching and inquiry, wondering, "How can we best use the power that imagination obviously holds to further our students' learning?" (p. 104).

Finally, in his award-winning book *Is This English? Race, Language, and Culture in the Classroom*, Bob Fecho (2004) takes us into the world of urban Philadelphia's Simon Gratz High School. Fecho provides a series of provocative scenarios that raise theoretically and pedagogically generative questions concerning issues of power, equity, achievement, and what it means to work together as members of a multicultural classroom community of relevance not only to preservice teachers but also to teacher educators, veteran teachers, and literacy researchers. Now a university professor, Fecho continues to serve as an influential advocate and conceptual guide to teachers seeking new lenses through which to examine the complexities of their own classrooms and practices (Fecho, 2003). More recently coauthoring with public-school colleagues (Aaron et al., 2006) and writing, as well, for audiences of researchers (Fecho & Botzakis, 2007) and policymakers (Schultz & Fecho, 2005), Fecho exemplifies a growing cohort of English educators whose work transcends the very categories of teacher and researcher.

Teachers and Researchers Together

The field has seen many instances of university-based researchers listing teachers as research-report coauthors (e.g., DiPardo & Schnack, 2004; Smagorinsky & Coppock, 1995; Smith & Connolly, 2005), reflecting a growing recognition that long-term observation in accomplished practitioners' classroom tends to promote a mutual

intellectual influence. Given the differing pressures and priorities of their respective work, however, far less often do professors and teachers collaborate closely in sustained and systematic data analysis. Even given the relative convenience of electronic communication, finding time and energy to sift through data and take up issues of interpretation is hardly easy. And even where they firmly believe that their perspectives can contribute more together than they could alone, formulating that shared vision means living in one another's worlds to an extent that time and circumstance rarely permit.

Exceptions, then, are well worth noting, and we focus here on one: the work of Sarah Warshawer Freedman of the University of California, Berkeley, and Berkeley High School teacher Verda Delp, authors of a *Research in the Teaching of English* article honored with the Alan C. Purves Award for its implications for classroom practice (Freedman & Delp, 2007; Freedman, Delp, & Crawford, 2005). Delp and Freedman had known one another for many years before first collaborating as university- and schools-based researchers in the M-Class Project (Freedman, Simons, Kalnin, Casareno, & the M-Class Teams, 1999). As they undertook a joint study of Delp's untracked eighth-grade English class, Freedman became a regular presence in Delp's school, even as Delp deepened her own understandings of theory and research by pursuing a doctorate; that is, while retaining primary membership in their respective places of employment, each gained insights into the norms, rituals, and priorities of the other's world and work. In weekly research meetings, they pored over data, challenged one another's understandings, and hammered out collaborative interpretations.

Their article, "Teaching English in Untracked Classrooms" (Freedman, Delp, & Crawford, 2005), offers a vivid illustration of a veteran teacher negotiating the Bakhtinian heteroglossia of her diverse classroom as well as an effort to extend social-cultural theory. Having since completed a doctoral dissertation that further explored the nature of talk, interaction, and learning in her classroom (Delp, 2005), Delp continues to teach at Berkeley High School as well as in the University of California, Berkeley, Multicultural Urban Secondary English teacher-education program (MUSE); Freedman, meanwhile, remains a regular presence Delp's classroom, as the two extend their efforts to chart the nature of student learning in what they call the "grand dialogic zones" (Freedman & Delp, 2007) of diverse whole-class settings. Their collaboration serves as a further instantiation of Bakhtinian heteroglossia—that is, more than pooling their existing wisdom, as Freedman and Delp move between these sites of teaching and learning, they are challenging, extending, and enriching one another's approaches to teaching and research alike.

Preparing New Teachers to Understand and Use Research

Although professional-development efforts that explore research–practice connections are many (e.g., the National Writing Project Institutes, the various National Endowment for the Humanities–sponsored Literature Institutes for Teachers, NCTE's Co-Learn; see also Appleman, 2000; Olson & Land, 2007), comparable work with preservice teachers is somewhat harder to find, although promising new efforts, such as the University of Arizona College of Education's (2007) Research

Initiative on Preparing Teachers for Mexican American Students, are endeavoring to fill this void. With the multiple and well-documented demands on neophyte teachers' intellectual and emotional energies, helping them also to incorporate research has required profound belief in the power of research to help realize teaching's fullest potentials.

George Hillocks's work with preservice teachers at the University of Chicago has been notable in this regard. Guided by decades of his own research on the teaching of writing, Hillocks has worked through the years with his master's of arts in teaching (MAT) students to prepare them to teach and conduct research in a diversity of secondary schools. He has brought to this work an abiding concern for young African American and Hispanic students' acquisition and development of literacy skills and knowledge in the contexts of public schools and has carefully developed empirical evidence that certain approaches to teaching writing have measurable effects on these. His recent work has addressed the teaching of narrative (Hillocks, 2007)—for the power of its generativity, its ability to bring into perspective the experiences that are part of students' developing lives, and the complex problem solving that it entails—which Hillocks and his MAT students aimed to make visible to middle and secondary school students.

The research–practice connection in this endeavor was multilayered. Working together in workshop fashion, Hillocks (2007) and his MAT students prepared, tried out, and then refined the daily lessons and strategies for teaching that would foster young students' narrative writing knowledge and skills. They went into classrooms to teach and observe one another teaching, went back to the university with samples of students' writing to read them critically and analytically and to reflect on their teaching following research precepts, and revised their teaching strategies accordingly in a process that covered the weeks it took to teach narrative—and in which the MAT students learned how to encourage rich and thoughtful writing, guide revision, and track student progress. In part, this was a case of a research explicitly informing and guiding MAT students' classroom experiences and reflections.

But another research layer added even more dimension to the experience. With his MAT students, Hillocks (2007) designed an experiment to assess the effects of their teaching on students' work. They set up a study with treatment groups (the classrooms in which they had taught) and control groups and administered pre- and posttest evaluations of students' writing across these classrooms, quantitatively measuring gains. (They found gains, indeed, in treatment compared with control groups and substantial gains for African American and Hispanic students.) This work offers a theoretical model for teaching in which new teachers come to understand the conceptual, technical, and pedagogical principles behind their work and to develop ways to probe and test them out in theoretically and methodologically systematic ways (see Lee, 2007b).

REWRITING THE NARRATIVE

We have attempted in this chapter to craft a narrative of the emergence, development, and present status of English education in the United States, exploring its early

preoccupation with national identity, its long-ambivalent relationship with university-based scholarship, the cumulative contributions of research to date, and emerging efforts to bring research and practice into unprecedented interaction. Theorists have pointed out that the narratives we craft are born of a desire to find generative meaning in what would otherwise stand as disparate chronologies (e.g., Sarbin, 1986). Disparity aplenty remains in the necessarily incomplete story we have told here concerning the nature and purpose of English as school subject and on the role of research from multiple and related disciplines in its advancement.

As the field endeavors to respond to reductionist conceptions of the appropriate priorities of high school English, this panoply of scholarly perspectives is at once promising and problematic. On one hand, given its focus on fostering young people's meaning-making capacities—and the globalized, digitalized, politically charged contexts in which literacy activities are currently situated—the questions before English educators demand inquiry and debate informed by diverse perspectives, methods, and insights. Although its scholarly variety holds benefits both realized and potential, the field's diverse range is also further complicating the always-complicated relationship between research and practice. Even as so-called scientifically based approaches to research have been widely condemned by English educators as lacking sensitivity to the range of literacy demands and opportunities before today's high school students, the field has only begun to take up the challenge of enacting and describing the array of ways that research *can* inform classroom practice. Just as the term *literacy* has shifted to the plural, so too is the "research–practice relationship" more appropriately cast as a diverse range of intellectual stances, enacted strategies, and nuanced patterns of effect. Absent redoubled and carefully sustained efforts to chart the contours of these relationships, the task is ceded to those who would posit a singular, transmission-oriented view of things, in which university-based scientists generate best practices to be enacted by teacher-technicians.

As the field nears its 100th anniversary, the challenge of preparing young people for the literacy demands of their personal, vocational, and civic futures is more pressing, complex, and contested than ever. Although nation building may have sat at the core of English education historically, as unfolding years and the broadening contexts of our research have pushed us to rethink the nature of nationhood in a globalizing world, new questions emerge concerning the implications for English as a secondary subject. As English educators address these challenges in the midst of policy initiatives informed by reductionist assumptions concerning the nature of literacy teaching and learning, rewriting the narrative of research–practice estrangement will afford new ways of seeing the connections between research and practice that, as this chapter has suggested, are "always already" there. What we need at this moment in our history is a way to theorize the relationship between English education research and practice in ways that honor and account for the field's conceptual diversity and expanding contours.

The questions driving the challenges before English education research and researchers are still those that scholars have asked for generations: "What is the scope

of English education and what is the role of research in shaping English education practice?" Yet the social, cultural, and political conditions that give these questions meaning have changed dramatically across the generations, and the challenges ahead that revolve around these questions are conceptually, empirically, and politically intertwined in new ways.

These questions are firmly grounded in a sense that students and teachers are contextually situated, shaped by multiple social and cultural influences and identifying as well with multiple ways of using language and of enacting literacy. One challenge for research, then, is to foster reading and writing that speak to these influences and to the varied worlds in which students make and take meaning. This sense of students' and English education goals casts anew the old Dartmouth focus on growth and equity: How can we better understand student literacy growth as fostering multiple, diverse, or hybridized identities? Put another way, what will count as literacy growth, and what will count as equitable growth across literacies as the range of student readers and writers expands in varied directions?

Another challenge is for researchers and teachers to develop understanding of the other: How can researchers better understand and conceptualize the complexities of practice? How do teachers develop as both consumers and facilitators of research as well as investigators or collaborators in research projects? We will need widespread initiatives for working with emerging teachers and researchers in these directions—fostering the kind of work conducted by academics and classroom teachers that advances knowledge and theory and that yields theoretically grounded and productive practice.

As researchers press forward with the varied research foci that have evolved through the decades, empirical challenges emerge. Research that focuses on individual students—future instantiations of which will likely emphasize emerging technologies for tracking thinking and learning—can give one kind of perspective on what is involved when students learn and develop as writers and readers over time and in changing material conditions. Research on the local dynamics of teaching and learning, which yield understandings about how reading and writing are constructed in real time, can give another perspective as researchers focus on diverse students and teachers with varied and expanding curricula. And as secondary English gets shaped by shifting political winds, technological tides, and other contextual forces, studies emphasizing these broader contexts can continue to add new social, cultural, and political perspectives to literacy and learning as these play out for different students and teachers in different school settings. Given change as the one true constant, we would argue that only such diverse methods and perspectives can help us read the moment at hand and give us insight about those to come.

In this complex empirical context, researchers face key questions: How can one type of research be critically in dialogue with others? How can "research in dialogue" be presented to inform policy or to be shared with others? What new genres of research presentation await? We need to know more about the ways teachers and researchers together can make sense of findings from different traditions as traditions evolve and sometimes merge.

Politically, challenges revolve around funding research from such multiple pathways, with varied researchers and teachers as key players, to include not only large-scale “scientifically based” projects but also critical social and cultural investigations in local settings. Projects across traditions complement and enrich one another, give one another meaning and perspective, and mutually shape their value to practice.

In sum, as the research story that we have told suggests, our field’s most promising vision for research is not somehow to unify its theoretical and empirical scope, and not to settle the issues of English education in recipe-fashion or to shut questions down. Rather, the promise of research is to provide multiple ways of seeing, critiquing, and generating questions—about teachers, students, reading, and writing—in the context of English and language arts as a school subject shaping membership on a world stage. We end with the thought that we need to construe English education’s story in new ways—to embrace, in a world of fluid boundaries, the field’s complexities, which research, in its generativity, has helped to account for and thus to make salient.

NOTE

¹According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2007), racial and ethnic minorities composed 42% of the K–12 public school population in 2005, up from 22% in 1972 (p. 26). A gap in reading proficiency between European American students and both Black and Hispanic students has meanwhile persisted; in 2005, on a 0-to-500 scale, Blacks scored 29 points lower than Whites, and Hispanics scored 26 points lower than Whites (p. 39), a gap that showed little sign of narrowing into middle school and beyond. Though drop-out rates for Black and Hispanic students declined slightly since 1972, Whites continued to drop out at significantly lower rates (p. 54). Not surprising, Black and Hispanic youth were more likely than their White counterparts to be neither enrolled in school nor working in 2006 (11% of Hispanic and 11% of Black youth as compared to 6% of Asian and 6% of White youth; p. 46).

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